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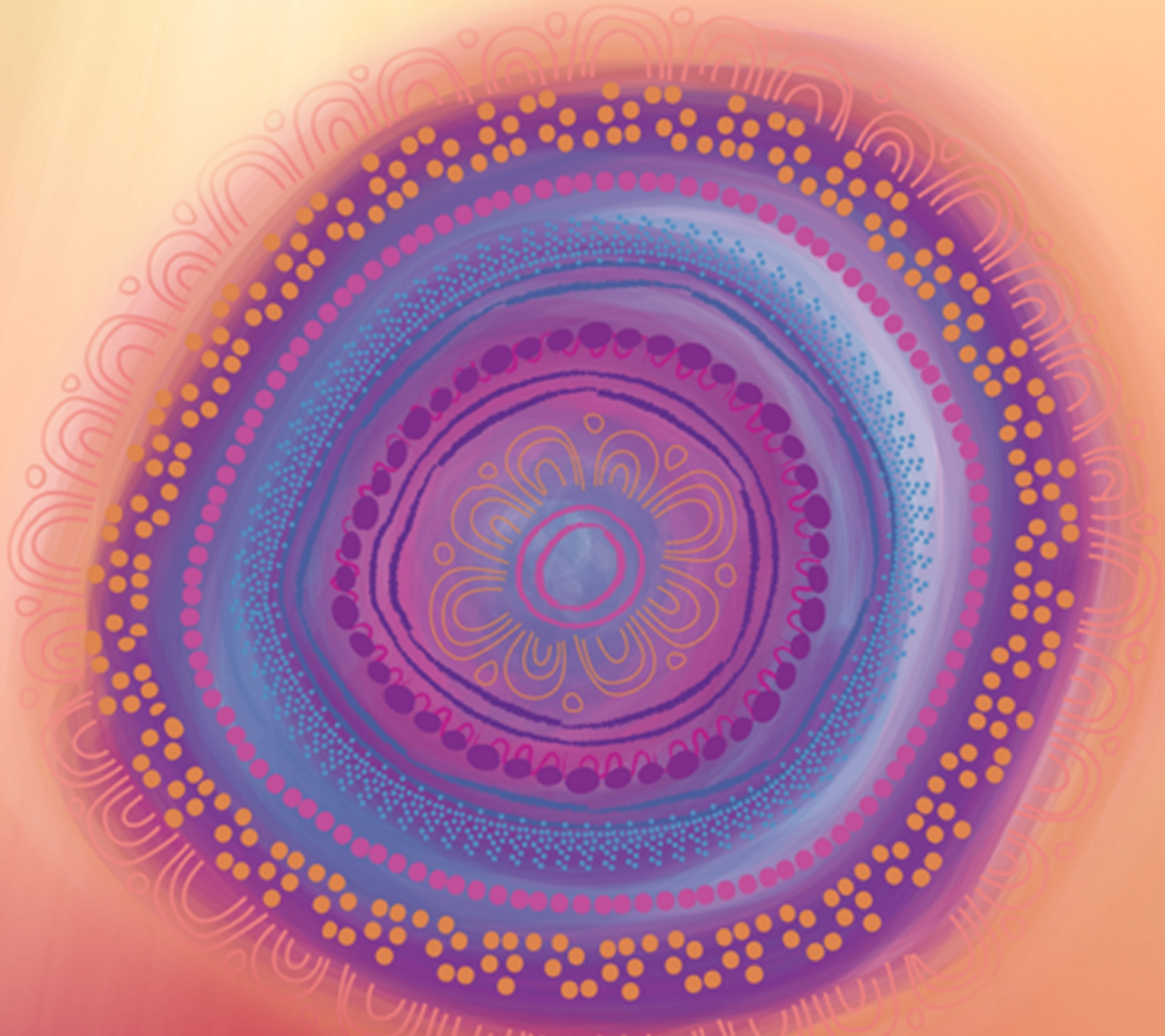
Pavak

Jonaraja Institute of
Genocide & Attrocities Studies

Polarisation & Aboriginal Philosophies



अपथ्याशीवबालः स सामन्तसहितस्ततः।
जनानाम जातिविध्वंसे सूहभट्टः कृतोद्यमः।।

- Pandit Jonaraja, Father of Genocide Studies

Pandit Jonaraja, the author of second Rajtarangini that follows the Rajtarangini of Kalhan, was a Kashmiri Shaivite Bhatta Brahmin. His real name was Jyotsanakar, meaning the creator of moonlight. This poetic name was true to his being. He was an exceptional and sensitive poet, well versed in history, astrology, Ayurveda, Yoga and subtler aspects of all these disciplines. He was a renowned Sanskrit scholar. His year of birth as per records available is estimated as 1389-90.

Like Kalhan he has written the history of Kashmir in poetry. But, that is not all about him. He has recorded the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits in detail and delineated its aspects like the present day genocide scholars.

Jati-Vidhwans - This is the word Jonaraja has coined to describe genocide. He has defined genocide and Raphael Lemkin's definition which came in 20th century closely mirrors Jonaraja's definition. He has even pointed out the special intent that motivates the perpetrator and given a very sensitive and vivid account of how an ideology radicalises a regime and effects a total change in its mode of operation that leads to genocide. He has made it clear that the mind of a perpetrator is at a very low level of maturity. That is the view held by present day genocide scholars also. His account of the first exodus of Kashmiri Pandits, if placed in correct context, is no different from the atrocities the community faced in 1990.

Roots of the field of genocide studies are found in Pandit Jonaraja. He, in every sense is **"Father of Genocide Studies."**

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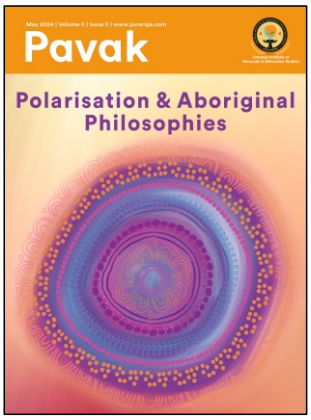

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Applying Indigenous Philosophy Lens to Genocide Studies

By centering indigenous perspectives, genocide studies can better address the ongoing legacies of colonial violence and support indigenous struggles for justice and self-determination.

Sunanda Vashisht
Editor-in-Chief, Pavak

The lens of philosophy can be incredibly useful in understanding genocide studies, as it allows for a deeper exploration of the underlying ideologies, ethical implications, and historical contexts surrounding genocide.

Philosophical frameworks provide tools to examine the ethical dimensions of genocide. Utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and other moral theories can be used to analyze the actions of perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers during genocidal events. For instance, one might examine whether utilitarian principles were used to justify the sacrifice of a group for the supposed greater good, or how deontological ethics were violated in the disregard for basic human rights.

Genocide often involves complex power dynamics and political structures. Philosophical perspectives on justice, power, authority, and governance can shed light on the systemic causes of genocide, including state-sponsored oppression, nationalism, colonialism, and racism. Philosophers like Hannah Arendt have examined how totalitarian regimes manipulate language and ideology to justify mass violence.

Understanding the historical context of genocide requires philosophical reflection on the nature of history itself. Philosophers of history explore questions about causation, agency, memory, and historiography. For example, postmodernist thinkers have critiqued grand narratives of progress and nationalism, highlighting the role of multiple perspectives and marginalized voices in shaping historical understanding.

Existentialist philosophy delves into questions of human freedom, responsibility, and existential angst. Examining genocide through this lens can illuminate the existential dilemmas faced by victims, perpetrators, and witnesses. Philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre have explored the ethical implications of individual and collective choices in the face of extreme violence.

When it comes to indigenous philosophies and their explanations of genocide, it's crucial to recognize that these perspectives offer unique insights rooted in the specific cultural and historical contexts of indigenous communities. Many indigenous philosophies emphasize interconnectedness, balance, and harmony with nature. These perspectives can provide alternative frameworks for understanding violence and conflict resolution, emphasizing the importance of restoring relationships and healing collective trauma.

Indigenous philosophies often offer critiques of colonialism and imperialism, highlighting the ways in which genocidal practices have been justified and perpetuated through systems of domination and exploitation. By centering indigenous perspectives, genocide studies can better address the ongoing legacies of colonial violence and support indigenous struggles for justice and self-determination. Indigenous philosophies often incorporate spiritual beliefs and practices that offer pathways to healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of genocide. These perspectives prioritize community resilience, cultural revitalization, and intergenerational healing, challenging Western approaches that prioritize individual trauma and pathology.

Indigenous philosophies challenge Eurocentric assumptions about knowledge and truth, offering alternative ways of knowing and understanding the world. By incorporating indigenous epistemologies into genocide studies, researchers can expand their methodological toolkit and create more inclusive and ethical research practices.

The lens of philosophy that includes indigenous perspectives, enriches our understanding of genocide by providing conceptual frameworks for analyzing its ethical, political, historical, and existential dimensions. By engaging with diverse philosophical traditions, genocide studies can better address the complexities of mass violence

Understanding the historical context of genocide requires philosophical reflection on the nature of history itself. Philosophers of history explore questions about causation, agency, memory, and historiography. For example, postmodernist thinkers have critiqued grand narratives of progress and nationalism, highlighting the role of multiple perspectives and marginalized voices in shaping historical understanding.

The forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from their homeland in the late 1980s and early 1990s disrupted this interconnectedness, leading to the rupture of familial, cultural, and spiritual ties that had been sustained for generations. Viewing the Kashmiri Pandit genocide through the lens of interconnectedness highlights the profound impact of displacement and loss on individuals, families, and communities.

and contribute to efforts for justice, reconciliation, and prevention.

Indigenous genocides represent some of the darkest chapters in human history, marked by systematic violence, dispossession, and cultural destruction inflicted upon indigenous peoples by colonial powers. Exploring these tragic events through the lens of indigenous philosophies offers valuable insights into the root causes, impacts, and potential pathways toward healing and justice.
Many indigenous cultures uphold holistic worldviews that emphasize the interconnectedness of all living beings and the land. For example, the Maori people of Aotearoa (New Zealand) view the land, or "whenua," as a living entity with its own rights and agency. When British colonizers seized Maori land through the process of "terra nullius" and imposed their own legal system, they not only deprived the Maori of their material resources but also violated their spiritual connection to the land. This dispossession and alienation from their ancestral territories contributed to profound cultural dislocation and intergenerational trauma among the Maori.

Colonial powers often imposed their own epistemologies and worldviews onto indigenous peoples, marginalizing or erasing indigenous ways of knowing and being. The forced conversion of indigenous peoples to Christianity, for instance, was not merely a religious imposition but also a form of epistemological violence that sought to erase indigenous cosmologies and spiritual practices. In the case of the Native American boarding school system in the United States and Canada, indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities, forbidden to speak their languages, and indoctrinated with Western values and beliefs. This deliberate assault on indigenous knowledge systems and cultural identities constitutes a form of genocide as defined by the United Nations.

Despite the devastation wrought by colonization, indigenous philosophies often emphasize resilience, resistance, and spiritual renewal. For example, the concept of "resurgence" among indigenous peoples in Australia, known as the "Aboriginal renaissance," signifies a reclaiming of cultural heritage and spiritual practices in the face of ongoing colonization. Indigenous communities have revitalized traditional ceremonies, languages, and ecological stewardship practices as acts of resistance against the ongoing legacies of genocide and dispossession. Similarly, the concept of "indigenismo" in Latin America reflects a growing movement to reclaim indigenous identities and assert political autonomy in the face of state-sponsored violence and discrimination.

Indigenous perspectives offer unique insights into the dynamics of polarization, particularly in the context of colonialism, cultural identity, and intergroup relations. Indigenous philosophies often highlight the role of colonialism in creating and perpetuating power imbalances that lead to polarization. Colonial powers sought to divide and conquer indigenous communities by imposing arbitrary categories of identity, such as race, ethnicity, and religion, which often exacerbated pre-existing social divisions. For example, in the Americas, European colonizers exploited existing rivalries between indigenous groups, pitting them against each other for control of land and resources. This manipulation of intergroup dynamics contributed to polarization and conflict within indigenous societies.

Indigenous perspectives emphasize the importance of cultural identity and belonging in shaping individual and collective identities. Polarization often occurs when dominant groups seek to marginalize or erase indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions, leading to a sense of cultural alienation and dislocation among indigenous peoples. For instance, policies of assimilation and forced acculturation, such as the Indian residential school system in North America, sought to eradicate indigenous languages and cultural practices, creating a divide between indigenous and non-indigenous populations. This cultural polarization can deepen social divides and perpetuate intergroup tensions.

Colonial policies of dispossession, displacement, and genocide continue to reverberate through indigenous communities, contributing to ongoing cycles of poverty, inequality, and marginalization. By addressing the root causes of systemic injustice and working towards decolonization and reconciliation, indigenous movements seek to dismantle the structures of power that sustain polarization and division.

Indigenous philosophies and Kashmiri Pandit Genocide:
The lens of indigenous philosophies can provide a unique perspective on understanding the Kashmiri Pandit genocide, offering insights into the historical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of this tragic event. While the Kashmiri Pandit genocide differs from indigenous genocides in some aspects, such as the identities of the perpetrators and victims, it shares similarities in terms of the systemic violence, displacement, and cultural destruction experienced by the Kashmiri Pandit community.

Indigenous philosophies center around the interconnectedness of all living beings and the land. Similarly, Kashmiri Pandit culture has deep roots in the Kashmir Valley, with a strong connection to its land, language, and traditions. The forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from their homeland in the late 1980s and early 1990s disrupted this interconnectedness, leading to the rupture of familial, cultural, and spiritual ties that had been sustained for generations. Viewing the Kashmiri Pandit genocide through the lens of interconnectedness highlights the profound impact of displacement and loss on individuals, families, and communities.

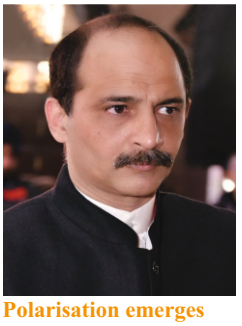
Indigenous philosophies often confront the legacy of colonialism and the erasure of indigenous cultures and knowledge systems. Similarly, the Kashmiri Pandit genocide can be understood as a form of cultural erasure, in which the perpetrators sought to eradicate the presence and influence of the Kashmiri Pandit community in the Kashmir Valley. This erasure was not only physical but also symbolic, as Kashmiri Pandit cultural heritage, including religious sites, artifacts, and practices, came under attack during the violence. By recognizing the parallels between indigenous struggles for cultural survival and the experiences of Kashmiri Pandits, we can better understand the broader dynamics of colonialism and cultural genocide.

Indigenous philosophies emphasize resilience, spirituality, and the importance of cultural renewal in the face of adversity. Despite the trauma of displacement and violence, many Kashmiri Pandits have maintained their cultural identity and spiritual practices, demonstrating a profound resilience in the face of persecution. The preservation of Kashmiri Pandit language, rituals, and oral traditions serves as a testament to their enduring resilience and determination to reclaim their heritage. Viewing the Kashmiri Pandit genocide through the lens of spirituality and resilience highlights the agency and strength of the Kashmiri Pandit community in the aftermath of collective trauma.

In Conclusion, indigenous philosophies offer rich insights into the historical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of indigenous genocides. By centering indigenous perspectives, we can better understand the root causes of colonial violence, the resilience of indigenous communities, and the pathways toward healing and justice. Moving forward, it is essential to amplify indigenous voices, uphold indigenous rights, and support indigenous-led initiatives for truth-telling, reconciliation, and decolonization. Only by acknowledging the wisdom of indigenous philosophies can we truly reckon with the legacy of genocide and work toward a more just and equitable future for all peoples.

In Conclusion, indigenous philosophies offer rich insights into the historical, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of indigenous genocides. By centering indigenous perspectives, we can better understand the root causes of colonial violence, the resilience of indigenous communities, and the pathways toward healing and justice.

Polarisation and Aboriginal Philosophies: A Study



Polarisation emerges from deep-seated differences—political, religious, cultural, or economic—that fragment societies into conflicting factions.

Tito Ganju
Chairman, JIGAS

Polarisation, the division of societies into opposing and often hostile groups, poses a significant threat to social cohesion and stability. When unchecked, it can lead to extreme ideologies, including those that justify genocide. Aboriginal philosophies, which emphasize interconnectedness, community solidarity, and harmony with nature, offer a stark contrast to these destructive ideologies. This study explores various Indigenous philosophies from around the world, highlighting their principles and practices, and demonstrating their superiority over genocidal ideologies.

Understanding Polarisation and Genocidal Ideologies

Polarisation emerges from deep-seated differences—political, religious, cultural, or economic—that fragment societies into conflicting factions. This division can escalate into severe social fragmentation and, in extreme cases, genocidal ideologies. Genocidal ideologies dehumanize certain groups and justify their systematic extermination, as evidenced by historical events such as the Holocaust, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Genocide of Hindus of Kashmir .

Aboriginal Philosophies: A Global Overview

Aboriginal philosophies, rooted in the traditions and worldviews of Indigenous peoples, prioritize principles that counteract the forces driving polarisation and genocide. These philosophies emphasize interconnectedness, communal responsibility, respect for nature, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Key Principles of Aboriginal Philosophies

Interconnectedness and Kinship: Indigenous cultures often view all life forms as interconnected. Humans are seen as part of a broader web of relationships that include the environment, animals, plants, and other people.

Communalism and Collective Responsibility: Many Aboriginal societies prioritize the well-being of the community over individual interests. Resources are shared, and decisions are made collectively to ensure the welfare of all members.

espect for Nature: Indigenous philosophies advocate for living in harmony with nature. They recognize the intrinsic value of the natural world and promote sustainable practices.

Spirituality and Tradition: Spiritual beliefs and traditional practices are integral to Indigenous life, fostering a strong sense of identity, continuity, and resilience.

Examples from Various Aboriginal Communities

1. Ubuntu (Southern Africa)

Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu term meaning "humanity towards others." It encapsulates the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity. Ubuntu emphasizes mutual care, community solidarity, and reconciliation.

Application: In post-apartheid South Africa, the principle of Ubuntu was central to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC facilitated a process where victims and perpetrators of apartheid-era violence could share their experiences and seek forgiveness. This approach helped heal the nation's deep divisions and foster a sense of collective responsibility and forgiveness.

2. The Dreaming (Australian Aboriginal)

The Dreaming refers to the spiritual, cultural, and social belief systems of Aboriginal Australians. It encompasses creation stories, laws, and practices that connect people to the land, ancestors, and each other.

Application: The Dreaming fosters a deep respect for all living beings and the environment, promoting a sense of interconnectedness and communal identity. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining balance and harmony within the community and the natural world.

3. Kaitiakitanga (Maori, New Zealand)

Kaitiakitanga is the Maori concept of guardianship, reflecting a responsibility to care for the environment and resources for future generations.

Application: The Maori practice of kaitiakitanga guides sustainable resource management and environmental stewardship. This approach ensures

Interconnectedness and Kinship: Indigenous cultures often view all life forms as interconnected. Humans are seen as part of a broader web of relationships that include the environment, animals, plants, and other people.

The Kashmiri Pandits, the original inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley, have a rich and complex history that spans thousands of years. This study explores their cultural, social, and spiritual life before and after the advent of Islam in Kashmir, using verses from the Rajataranginis,upto 12th-century and thereafter chronicles by Kalhana, Jonaraja, Shrivar, Prajyabhatta and Shuka to illuminate their experiences and resilience.

that the needs of current and future generations are met, promoting both environmental and social stability.

4. The Seventh Generation Principle (Iroquois, North America)

This principle advocates making decisions that consider their impact on the seventh generation into the future.

Application: The Seventh Generation Principle promotes long-term thinking, sustainability, and the well-being of future generations. It encourages decisions that benefit not only the present community but also those yet to come, fostering a sense of responsibility and stewardship.

5. Pachamama (Quechua, South America)

Pachamama, or Mother Earth, is revered in Andean cultures as a goddess who sustains life.

Application: The reverence for Pachamama fosters a profound respect for nature and the environment. This belief encourages sustainable living and community harmony, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life.

6. Dadirri (Aboriginal Australians)

Dadirri is a deep spiritual practice of inner, quiet listening and reflection. It emphasizes patience, respect, and understanding.

Application: Dadirri is used to foster healing and reconciliation within communities. It encourages deep listening and reflection, which can help resolve conflicts and build stronger, more cohesive communities.

7. Ayelkete (Tlingit, North America)

Ayelkete emphasizes respect and the proper way of doing things, including living in harmony with nature and respecting all beings.

Application: The Tlingit people use Ayelkete to guide interactions within their community and with the environment. This philosophy promotes sustainable practices and respectful relationships, fostering community resilience.

Case Study: Kashmiri Pandits –

The Kashmiri Pandits, the original inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley, have a rich and complex history that spans thousands of years. This study explores their cultural, social, and spiritual life before and after the advent of Islam in Kashmir, using verses from the Rajataranginis,upto 12th-century and thereafter chronicles by Kalhana, Jonaraja, Shrivar, Prajyabhatta and Shuka to illuminate their experiences and resilience. By examining their historical context, we can gain insights into the profound impact of polarisation and the enduring strength of Indigenous philosophies.

Historical Background

Early History

The Kashmiri Pandits are a Brahmin community that traces its origins to the Pre Vedic period. Their history is documented in the Rajataranginis ("River of Kings"), which chronicles the reigns of the kings of Kashmir from ancient times until the 12th century and thereafter.These texts are invaluable for understanding the cultural and intellectual life of early Kashmir.

Excerpts from Rajatarangini:

"मुक्ता-कुंडल-मण्डित-मधुपान-मदविह्वलम्।
यत्र शश्वत् प्रतीकाशं विद्यते रजनीकरः॥"

(***"Where the moon, adorned with a garland of pearls, is forever intoxicated by the nectar of the lotus."***)

This verse captures the serene and prosperous life in Kashmir, symbolizing the intellectual and cultural richness of the region.

The Advent of Islam

Islam began to spread in Kashmir in the 14th century, primarily through the missionary activities of Sufi Muslims.The initial period saw a synthesis of Hindu and Islamic cultures. However, with the establishment of Muslim rule, particularly under Sultan Sikandar in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, the Kashmiri Pandits faced significant challenges, including forced conversions and persecution.

Excerpts from Rajatarangini:

"निराश्रया निरानन्दा व्रजन्ति किमपीहिता।
कश्मीरा विगतानन्दाः सन्त्यजन्ति नृपं क्रमात्॥"

("Homeless, joyless, and aimless, the Kashmiri people gradually abandoned their king.")

This verse reflects the profound distress and upheaval experienced by the Kashmiri Pandits during this turbulent period.

Life Before the Advent of Islam

Cultural and Intellectual Contributions

The Kashmiri Pandits made significant contributions to Sanskrit literature, philosophy, and religious practices. Renowned scholars like Abhinavagupta and Vasugupta were instrumental in developing Kashmir Shaivism, a major school of Hindu philosophy.

Excerpts from Rajatarangini:
"विद्वद्भिरत्यादृतं यस्य सदा सत्यं च दर्शितम्।
प्रकाशं काश्मीरभूषा-भूतं साहित्य-रत्नम्॥"
("Always respected by scholars and ever manifesting truth, the gem of literature adorned Kashmir.")

Social and Religious Practices
The Pandits' social life was marked by vibrant religious practices, including elaborate rituals and festivals. Temples were centres of learning and community gatherings.

Excerpts from Rajatarangini:
"नित्यं यत्र प्रवर्तन्ते यज्ञ-हविर-होमकाः।
देवालयेऽपि यः पश्येत् सदैव पुण्य-पालकम्॥"
("Where daily offerings and sacred fires are perpetually maintained, and one sees the ever-present guardian of virtue in the temple.")

Life After the Advent of Islam
Persecution and Resilience
The advent of Islam, especially under the reign of Sultan Sikandar, brought about a period of intense persecution for the Kashmiri Pandits. Despite this, they displayed remarkable resilience, preserving their traditions and identity through covert practices and migration.

Excerpts from Rajatarangini:
"विस्मृताः सर्व-धर्मेण यान्ति काश्मीर-पण्डिताः।
विप्रलम्भा-दुराधर्षा नष्ट-धर्माणि सर्वतः॥"
("The Kashmiri Pandits, forgotten by all religions, wander aimlessly, their faith lost everywhere due to unbearable adversity.")

Cultural Preservation and Diaspora
Despite facing severe oppression, the Kashmiri Pandits managed to preserve their rich cultural heritage. Many migrated to other parts of India, where they continued their traditions and contributed to their adopted communities.

Excerpts from Rajatarangini:
"यत्र यत्र गच्छन्ति विप्राः सन्त्यजन्ति च।
तत्र तत्र प्रभुता धर्म-रक्षिता सदैव च॥"
("Wherever the Pandits go and settle, they always uphold and protect their faith.")

Philosophical Insights and Indigenous Resilience
The philosophies and traditions of the Kashmiri Pandits emphasize respect for nature, communal harmony, and the pursuit of knowledge, which resonate with the broader principles of Aboriginal philosophies globally.

Key Philosophical Tenets
Interconnectedness and Respect for Nature: Kashmiri Pandit traditions include a deep reverence for the natural environment. Rituals and festivals, such as the spring festival Navreh, celebrate the renewal of nature and the interconnectedness of life.

Community Solidarity and Mutual Support
The Pandits traditionally practiced a communal lifestyle, with an emphasis on mutual support and collective well-being. This communalism was evident in their joint family systems and community events.

Spirituality and Preservation of Culture: Spiritual practices, including meditation, prayer, and the celebration of Hindu festivals like Shivratri, are central to their cultural identity. These practices foster a strong sense of community and continuity.

Comparative Analysis with Other Indigenous Philosophies
The resilience of the Kashmiri Pandits mirrors the strength of Indigenous communities worldwide. Their emphasis on interconnectedness, communalism, and spirituality parallels philosophies such as Ubuntu in Africa, Kaitiakitanga in New Zealand, and the Seventh Generation Principle among the Iroquois.

The history of the Kashmiri Pandits, marked by periods of prosperity, persecution, and resilience, provides profound insights into the enduring power of Indigenous philosophies. By examining their cultural and philosophical traditions through the lens of the Rajatarangini, we can appreciate the depth of their contributions and their unwavering commitment to preserving their heritage in the face of adversity.

The Kashmiri Pandits' experiences underscore the importance of maintaining cultural identity and community solidarity in the face of polarisation and genocidal ideologies. Their story is a testament to the resilience and strength of Indigenous philosophies, offering valuable lessons for fostering unity and resilience in diverse societies.

By embracing and learning from these Indigenous wisdoms, we can cultivate a greater sense of shared humanity and mutual respect, essential for overcoming the divisive challenges of our time and building a more harmonious and sustainable future.
Polarisation poses significant challenges to social cohesion and stability. Aboriginal philosophies, with their emphasis on interconnectedness, community solidarity, respect for nature, and holistic well-being, offer valuable lessons for addressing and mitigating polarisation. By drawing on the principles and practices of Indigenous peoples worldwide, we can find pathways to heal divisions and build more inclusive, resilient societies. Aboriginal philosophies provide a superior framework for fostering unity and resilience against the divisive and destructive forces of genocidal ideologies, offering hope for a more just and equitable world. By embracing these Indigenous wisdoms, societies can cultivate a greater sense of shared humanity and mutual respect, essential for overcoming the challenges of our time.

Eco-environmental Realism: A Depolarizing Philosophy

Dharma, in Indic thought has always been a word that represents moral ethics. Dharma is right or good and Adharma (Non-dharma) is wrong or evil. Genocide is the ultimate evil, the crime of crimes, the atrocity of atrocities.

Dr. Dileep Kumar Kaul
Director, JIGAS

The phenomenon of genocide has been examined through the lenses of all academic disciplines. But much has not been done about it through the sphere of philosophy. The word "philosophy" ,if we go by its etymological meaning comes from the Greek word "philosophia" which means love of wisdom and knowledge. The question that emerges is that how can the love of knowledge and wisdom be applied to the crime of crimes, the atrocity of atrocities that is genocide? The Sanskrit word for philosophy is "darśanaśāstra." This word comes from two words darśana and śāstra. Śāstra is the field of knowledge. the word Darśana is significant here. Darśana means deep examination of a thing, observing it in its wholeness, experiencing its core, draw conclusions and express it. We do not have just a look at a sage or a deity. We have Darśana. We feel the essence of our deity, articulate the experience and express it. In this manner when we examine things and phenomena, we are actually employing philosophical scrutiny, the methodology of Darśanaśāstra.

Dharma, in Indic thought has always been a word that represents moral ethics. Dharma is right or good and Adharma (Non-dharma) is wrong or evil. Genocide is the ultimate evil, the crime of crimes, the atrocity of atrocities. What is an atrocity? It is not a property of the evil act, but our response to it. If we say that genocide is an atrocity, we do not want to say that it is an immoral act. We want to convey that it has caused an immeasurable moral outrage. Atrocity is a highly traumatic response and this high trauma cannot be normally assimilated. If we want to assimilate trauma there is no way but to express the incalculable pain otherwise the pain can paralyse other human faculties.

This brings us to the question of "self". There are many aspects of life. Each area constitutes a part of self. Academic, professional, social, ethnic, racial, national, religious etc are part of our total self. These concepts of self are organised within an individual in terms of the least and the most important. In short, self is a network of different entities that constitute an individual, his sense of who he is, his tendencies, thoughts, abilities, skills and weaknesses. The concept of self is closely related with the sense of identity. Identity is created by the memories, experiences relationships an individual experiences while living at a place. The place and sense of it, are integral to the identity of an individual. There is always a feeling associated with identity. This creates a sense of who an individual is till with the passage of time, new elements are added to it making the identification of an individual high or low. When genocide is added to the identity of a survivor, the incalculable moral outrage paralyses his other abilities, the aspect of his identity that has made the perpetrator commit the genocide of the victims, is foregrounded when the expression of the atrocity is given to the world. This makes genocide the crime or identity. The perpetrator kills a man and his identity. This constitutes the double intent that is the identifying aspect of genocide.

The western model of self comes with a sense of something that is apart from the surroundings and other people. It is a very individualistic kind of concept that ignores the fact that any man or animal is always placed and can never be without an association with the dwelling place and whatever is contained in it. Every aspect of our surroundings is a living pulsating energy having its effects on everything, including us. A ground breaking text of Indian philosophy, spanda kārikās has this to say about the matter:

yasmāta sarvamayo jīvaḥ sarvabhāvasamādbhavāt|
tatsaṃvedanarupeṇa tādātmyapratipattitaḥ||3
tasmācchabdārthacintāsu na sāvasthā na yā śivaḥ|
bhoktaiva bhogyabhāvena sadā sarvatra
saṃsthitaḥ||4

The Sanskrit word for philosophy is "darśanaśāstra." This word comes from two words darśana and śāstra. Śāstra is the field of knowledge. the word Darśana is significant here. Darśana means deep examination of a thing, observing it in its wholeness, experiencing its core, draw conclusions and express it. We do not have just a look at a sage or a deity. We have Darśana. We feel the essence of our deity, articulate the experience and express it. In this manner when we examine things and phenomena, we are actually employing philosophical scrutiny, the methodology of Darśanaśāstra.

Jiva, the individual self that is limited is similar to the vast boundless universe. All things around us come from Shiva, who knows everything and has the feeling of oneness with all of them. So, a word, its meaning or the object it represents or any kind of thought, there is no state of anything which is not Shiva. One who experiences himself, always and everywhere, is never separate from the experienced, the ultimate divinity. It is that divinity that experiences and the same divinity exists in the form of the universe which is his field of experience.

Here, the experience of the self is not centred on ego, the individual self, but expands much beyond that to the whole universe and even to the ultimate cosmic energy, that creates everything. This means that the boundaries of the self are broken. Everything around is you and you are everything around. This is the concept of the ecological self. The same kind of concept was proposed by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess that aims at expansion of the self from individuated to ecological self. The ecological self, moves from human centric approach to care for all life and its supporting elements.
Kashmir Shaivism is the aboriginal philosophy of Kashmir. It is clear that the roots of the concept of ecological self are found in spanda kārikās. The concept of ecological self finds expression in many Indian scriptures. A very lucid expression of the concept is found in verse 71, chapter 6 of Mahopnishad¬:

ayaṃ nijaḥ paroveti gaṇanā laghucetasām |
udāracaritānāṃ tu vasudhaivakuṭumbakam | |

This is my own and that is not, such calculations are done by narrow minded ones. Large hearted people see this whole earth as their family. The largehearted ones know no boundaries of consciousness. They have an expanded self that breaks the boundaries to the limits of the earth or beyond that. This is the key concept of aboriginal Indic moral philosophy. It has been the foundational element of Indic thinking and has lent a profound base to contemporary Indic philosophical thought. Before we begin a discussion of a philosophical enquiry that takes off from vasudhaivakuṭumbakam, the state of universal connectedness, it will be apt to discuss the concept of polarization, the sixth stage of genocide that prepares a community for the annihilation of other communities. The stage of polarization is about creating and intensifying divisions and boundaries between people and communities. The polarized self is the perpetrator self. The perpetrator acts totally contrary to the concept of vasudhaivakuṭumbakam. The stage of polarization during the process of genocide is, in fact, not the polarization of individuals but the polarization of groups. The polarization of individuals is termed as belief polarization in which an individual may process the information as per his biases.

Group polarization occurs within a group. The members of a group discuss an issue and adopt a more extreme view than they held before the discussion, all members of the group get polarized in the same direction thus causing the polarization of the whole group. This is because the average expression of the group is more extreme an it was before. In Kashmir mosques, where people assembled regularly for discussions, played a great role in the facilitation of group polarization
To understand group polarization in a genocidal perspective we need to turn to social identity theory. The basic point of this theory that social identities come into existence when people belong to an in-group and an out-group. This makes it clear that group polarisation operates in an intergroup perspective. Group polarisation involves a central point to which whole of the in-group agrees. All members of the in-group put themselves in a specific category when they come across the views of other groups. This confrontation with other groups strengthens the identity of the members of the in-group. The differences within the group become lesser as the differences with other groups keep increasing. The in-group wants to look different from other groups and it is the difference in identity that the members of the group want to maintain. Group polarisation is marked by increase in the intensity of the average belief of the group. It is apt to mention here that group polarisation was first discovered by Stoner an MIT student. He called it "Risky shift". The concept of "Risky shift" tells us about the shift that the change in the decisions of a group occurs after discussion. When the shift in the decision occurs after the discussion in a group, that decision on the average, Involves more risk than the decisions of the individual members before the group discussion.

Let us imagine a religious place. All who visit the place do not hold radicalised views. As a discussion begins with an aim to indoctrinate people slowly and steadily views begin to converge and opposing views offer no challenge. Some people who joined the discussion lose their individuality and

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There is a natural environment around us. Humans alter this environment by constructing many things in the natural environment and by doing destructive acts. They even commit the crime of crimes that is genocide which beyond doubt alters the environment. The environment that is altered by humans is situated in an ecology, the system where everything is connected with everything else. When the environment is altered, ecology cannot remain unaffected.

get committed to keep a common view of the group intact. In such a polarised atmosphere those who wanted to remain neutral felt the pressure to accept the polarised view and thus own the extreme attitude. The "Risky Shift" may drive the in-group and the out-group so apart that the in-group may physically assault the moderates within their group and attack the leaders of the target group. The target group's any ability to defend themselves is also made ineffective through whatever means possible. This is the genocidal "Risky shift."

Now the question is –Can we prevent the polarization? Is depolarization possible? From the discussion of group polarisation we understand that social comparison evokes the possibilities of polarization. Aboriginal philosophies have the power to create conditions for depolarization. The two verses from spanda kārikās given above eliminate social classification and thus represent a depolarising philosophy. The concept of vasudhaivakuṭumbakam is also depolarising in nature and both spanda kārikās and Mahopnishad¬, have indic aboriginal philosophies in them. Attempts to create depolarising philosophies are not likely to succeed if we ignore aboriginal philosophies.

A representative depolarising philosophy of our times is ecological-environmental realism. The propounder of this philosophy is the world-renowned philosopher Prof. Girdhari Lal Pandit. The foundational thought of this philosophy is vasudhaivakuṭumbakam that means this whole world is a family. What does this ancient principle remind us about? Prof. Pandit says that this principle takes our thinking about the environment to a higher level, the level from where we can get an expanded understanding and sense of management about the environment. This principle hints at ecological-environmental nest of universal interconnectedness. The sense of family of a man is extended to the whole earth. It is equal to the principle explained in the above given verses of spanda kārikās where limited individual self is similar to vast boundless universe. So, the universe is the self and the self is the universe. In the concept of vasudhaivakuṭumbakam, nest is a world and world is a nest. The concept moves from a human centric approach to care for everything on this earth. This sense of universal interconnectedness constitutes the ecological self. This is the ecological-environmental nest of universal interconnectedness. This is the ultimate depolarising principle.

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Seen in the genocidal perspective, when the environmental reality gets altered, ecology is also altered. A verse from the Rajtarangini of Srivara makes this fact clear:

kā jugupsā turuṣkeṣu sarvamāṃsabhujo vayam |
yāvata puṃpaśugomāṃsaparyāptistāvadāsyate | | 4.246

(Turushkas hate no kind of food. We eat all kinds of meat. Till male animals, cow meat is available we shall stay.)

This is the message sent by Sayyads to Kashmiris when they were fighting a war. In 1484, the notorious Sayyad invasion had occurred. The Sayyads were encircled by Kashmiri forces and asked to surrender. But Sayyads were not going to give up. They said that they were not going to give up because they could eat any kind of meat. Till male animals and cows were there they were going to stay. This implies that Kashmiris did not eat cow meat and there was some kind of association between them and cows. In Kashmiri culture there was still a sense of universal interconnectedness between man and other forms of life but Sayyads did not have such kind of ecological consciousness. In Rwanda Hutu perpetrators were directed to kill Tutsis and eat their cows. Tutsis were cow herders and cows formed the basis of their economy. That economic interconnectedness was attacked by the perpetrators of genocide.

If we look at genocide and other forms of violence from the point of view of ecological-environmental realism, these forms of violence may vary in degree by are the result of the inability of humans to connect their ecological selves with the environment. Prof. Pandit does not use the 'G' word but refers to such situations in his essay "Rethinking Nature and Environment".

Ecological-environmental realism consists of two key principles:

1) The principle of environmental nesting-1. It refers to all man-environment interactions that occur within the vast field of universal interconnectedness. Prof. Pandit says that EN-1 is not just about our knowledge of ecological order of nature and interdependencies within it. Equal emphasis is laid on our participation in that universal interconnectedness.

2) The principle of environmental nesting-2. This refers to values and strategies that enable us to plan and sustain the relationship with those forms of nature that are involved in EN-1. This is a guiding principle that makes us think about the possibilities of participation by both man and nature in whatever we plan for our development. This principle lays emphasis on the fact that whatever changes or improvements we want to bring about in our condition we should treat the relevant environments, regularly being destroyed by humans, as part of the environmental nest of universal interconnectedness. From this perspective, if we examine any genocidal environment, it becomes clear that the dominant perpetrator community never holds the worldview of universal interconnectedness. Prof. Pandit makes the point that any violation of nature's interest is the violation of human interest and vice-versa.

Prof. Pandit raises the crucial issue of environmental externalities. He says that human beings have a harmful effect on the global environment. But our own existence as humans is not important for the planet Earth. It existed and thrived before humans came into existence. We have always tried to conquer the environment through different ways and means. So, we are an emergent externality to the very system that sustains us. We need a line of thought, that does not strengthen the condition of human externality. EN-1 is the strategy to achieve that.

Diverse cultures and languages all over the world are crucially associated with diversities of natural environment. These associations are deep and internal. We grow and develop in an environment, speaking a particular language. A verse from Srivara's Zaina Rajtarangini makes it clear:

kimanyada dvijavada deśe sarve granthā manoramāḥ |
kathāvaśeṣatāṃ yātāḥ padamānīva himāgame | | 5.77

(What more should I tell…in this country all books vanished just like Brahmins, exactly like lotus flowers with a snowfall.) Here, the experience of cultural genocide is associated with place and environment. This internal link between language and environment constitutes the expression of remembrance and mourning in this verse, because only a Kashmiri has the perceptual experience of the state of lotus flowers when snow falls.

Elaborating upon the situation of Jews under Nazi regime and Kashmiri Pandits in 1990, Prof. Pandit says that the uprootment of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley of Kashmir over many centuries reached its climax in early 1990. History was repeated and they were made refugees in their own country. They have been robbed of the order of universal interconnectedness by taking away not only their ecological self but also the spaces of their language, culture and interconnectedness that defined their ethnic identity.
In 1989-90, Kashmiri Pandits, both rural and urban, had to flee to the plains of India. Their collective consciousness could not but live in the space-time defined by their childhood experiences of their identity, values and language. As ecological self is what the philosophy of ecological-environmental realism aims at it asks the question that does loss of home cause a gain in the consciousness of self, especially the ecological self? The ethnic identity of Kashmiri Pandits was defined by their language scapes and custom-scapes. These were the spaces where they offered their daily prayers and established deep association with earth. These spaces were lost. An ecological catastrophe occurred. An ancient culture with its thriving ecologies of environmental nesting vanished abruptly from the valley under the very nose of the state.

Ecological-environmental realism puts the concept of realism in the correct perspective. No reality can exist without a place and no place where man dwells is possible without an environment and an ecology. Ecological-environmental realism brings forth the distinction between the violent powers that aim at exploiting and destroying the environment that may be natural, social or cultural and the powers that foreground ecological self of a man that places him in a perspective of universal interconnectedness. This universal interconnectedness is inherent in almost all aboriginal philosophies that exist in this world. All such philosophies are depolarising in nature. The so called elite cultures under the delusion of being civilized have only discriminated against the people who nurtured such depolarising philosophies and committed genocide on the aborigines who had been holding these philosophies for centuries.

The same thing happened in Kashmir. Prof. Pandit dedicates his work to his late brother Roshan Lal Pandit and mother Smt. Shobhawati Pandit who have left this world but their precious memories remain. This memorialization of two

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nearest relatives comes with a sense of the ecological-environmental reality of the two, who had to flee Kashmir, their homeland under the genocidal assault of 1990. Prof. Pandit underlines the developed ecological selves of his mother and brother. Their ecological selves carried deep inside them the wounds and pain of all the other members of the uprooted Kashmiri Pandit community, of decades of their homelessness, of loss of their ecological and cultural spaces of universal interconnectedness. The foundational reference points of the philosophical scrutiny come from the blood relations of the philosopher which makes those relations the representations of pain and agony of the community they belonged and the loss of ecological self they suffered from the genocidal event.

Ecological-environmental realism comes with an assertion that no philosophy can serve the purpose of human understanding and world peace unless aboriginal philosophies are brought in focus and new lines of thought developed on the foundations of these philosophies. This realism explains EN-1 as the order of being, the order of universal interconnectedness, the order of life and existence in the physical universe the history of which we are a part of. EN-2 is explained as the order of becoming that enables us to frame new options for our future.

We have only one moral option left—nurturing our ecological selves and enable universal interconnectedness of our local natural environment. That will stop us from investing our efforts in conquering the environment. And when we live in unison with our environment, we shall naturally live in harmony with other groups and never think of annihilating them.

A pioneer of ecocriticism in literature Prof. Lawrence Buell has said that environmental crisis involves a crisis of imagination. The phenomenon of genocide is a crisis of socio-cultural environment. Ecological-environmental realism, through its principles of EN-1 and EN-2 stimulates in us a new imagination—the world as a nest and the nest as a world. When world is a nest, everyone is our family as per the root principle of vasudhaivakuṭumbakam. So we shall not aim at othering of other communities and think of annihilating them. That will save our socio-cultural environment. And when we have to live along with other fellow human beings, we have to save our natural environment. That is what every aboriginal philosophy aims at.

Manifest Destiny and Indian Removal

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A convergence of several social, economic, and political factors helped urge the speed of westward expansion in the nineteenth century. Mass immigration from Europe had swelled the East Coast of the United States to record population numbers, pushing settlement westward. Expansion really boomed with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, driving both the population and economy to the west. As the boundaries of America grew, white settlers and proponents of expansion began to voice concerns over what they considered an obstacle to settlement and America's economic and social development – the American Indian tribes living on lands east of the Mississippi River which bordered white settlement. The land was home to many tribal nations including the Cherokee, Creek and Seminole in the south and the Choctaw and Chickasaw in the west. That land held the promise of economic prosperity to raise cattle, wheat, and cotton, and harvest timber and minerals. Eager to take possession of the land, the settlers began to pressure the federal government to acquire the lands from the Indian tribes. To these white settlers, the Indian tribes were standing in the way of progress and of America's manifest destiny. The self-serving concept of manifest destiny, the belief that the expansion of the United States was divinely ordained, justifiable, and inevitable, was used to rationalize the removal of American Indians from their native homelands. In the minds of white Americans, the Indians were not using the land to its full potential as they reserved large tracts of unspoiled land for hunting, leaving the land uncultivated. If it was not being cultivated, then the land was being wasted. Americans declared that it was their duty, their manifest destiny, which compelled them to seize, settle, and cultivate the land. Not surprisingly, the most active supporters of manifest destiny and proponents of Indian removal were those who practiced land speculation. Land speculators bought large tracts of land with the expectation that the land would quickly increase in value as more people settled in the west and demand for that western land increased. As the western land was admitted into the Union, it would consequently increase in value. The Speculator, 1852, Francis William Edmonds The Origins of Indian Removal Though it came to fruition under Andrew Jackson's administration in the nineteenth-century, the idea of Indian removal has its origins rooted earlier in the eighteenth-century. A form of Indian removal was first proposed by one of our Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson. Unlike African Americans, Jefferson believed that Indians were the equals of whites, "in body and mind." Yet Jefferson found them culturally inferior due to their lifestyle and traditions. He believed that their seminomadic lifestyle, communal agricultural practices, and hunting traditions did not use the land efficiently. It was assumed that if the Indians adopted a European-style of agriculture and settled in European-style towns and villages only then would they progress from their natural "savage" state to "civilization." Jefferson's beliefs on civilization were formed from the Enlightenment idea of environmentalism, which dictated that a human's environment is shaped by their culture. But Jefferson's intentions were not as socially motivated as they were economic – if Indians abandoned their hunting grounds that then freed up land for white settlement. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 provided a neat solution for Jefferson, one in which Indians would not have to choose between assimilation and extermination. The government could relocate Indians further westward, delaying the inevitable acculturation, while opening up the vacated lands to white settlement. Later, President James Monroe expanded on Jefferson's ideas and beliefs on Indian removal in an 1825 address to Congress. He abandoned the idea that the Indians could be assimilated into white culture, and he argued that, therefore, it would be to the benefit of the tribes to be removed from their lands for their well-being: The removal of the tribes from the territory which they now inhabit . . . would not only shield them from impending ruin, but promote their welfare and happiness. Experience has clearly demonstrated that in their present state it is impossible to incorporate them in such masses, in any form whatever, into our system. It has also been demonstrated with equal certainty that without a timely anticipation of an provision against the dangers to which they are exposed, under causes which it will be difficult, if not impossible to control, their degradation and extermination will be inevitable. Thomas Jefferson, 1805/1821, Gilbert Stuart, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution While Indian removal as a policy was first envisioned by Thomas Jefferson, and structured by James Monroe, it was Andrew Jackson who fully realized removal, pushing the policy into law. Jackson had long been a supporter of removal. Prior to his presidency, he had commanded military forces in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida to quell Indian resistance to white expansion and settlement. He also negotiated several treaties in the 1810s and 1820s which divested southern Indian tribes of their eastern land in exchange for land in the west. Jackson offered his own justification for Indian removal in December 1829, claiming that the removal was necessary for the preservation of American Indians – essentially asserting that removal was a humanitarian act for the good of the Indian tribes. [The Indians'] present condition with what they once were, makes a most powerful

appeal to our sympathies. Our ancestors found them the uncontrolled possessors of these vast regions. By persuasion and force, they have been made to retire from river to river, and from mountain to mountain; until some of the tribes have become extinct, and others have left but remnants, to preserve, for a while, their once terrible names. . . . This fate surely awaits them, if they remain within the limits of the States, does not admit of a doubt. Humanity and national honor demand that every effort should be made to avert so great a calamity. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 As president, Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law on May 28, 1830. It authorized him to reserve land west of the Mississippi River and exchange it for Native American land to the east of the Mississippi. Those Indians who did not wish to relocate would become citizens of their home state. After the Indian Removal Act had passed, Jackson continued to publically justify removal. In part of his State of the Union Address of December 6, 1830, Jackson went further, arguing that removal benefited both Indians and whites: It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the Andrew Jackson, 1835, Ralph Eleaser Whiteside Earl Government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion? . . . How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indian were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy. The conditions and offers, as Jackson proposed them, were as follows: each tribe would receive a territory exceeding the size that they had relinquished to the U.S government. They would be moved to that new territory at the expense of the U.S., and provided supplies such as clothing, arms, and ammunition. They would continue to be provided these supplies for a period of one year after their arrival to their new homeland. Arrangements would be made for the support of schools and for the maintenance of the poor. As Jackson wrote, "Such are the arrangements for the physical comfort and for the moral improvement of the Indians." As the years went by and resistance and opposition to removal from certain nations, especially the Seminoles, became increasingly apparent, Jackson's tone on Indian removal became less hospitable and less conciliatory. In 1835, he wrote "All preceding experiments for the improvement of the Indians have failed. It seems now to be an established fact that they can not live in contact with a civilized community and prosper." The Trail of Tears However, removal was not met with gratitude or joy by the majority of American Indians forced to leave their homelands. American Indian participation in removal was meant to be voluntary, and the act required the U.S. government to negotiate fairly with the tribes, but this was not often the result. Many tribes were forcibly removed from their lands, in particular the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole. This series of forced migrations became known as the Trail of Tears. Not all were in favor of removal. The most vocal and prominent among those opposed was Tennessee congressman and American frontiersman of lore Davy Crockett. In 1834 Crockett stated his opposition, that if the next president, Martin Van Buren, continued Jackson's Indian policies, Crockett would move to "the wildes of Texas." I have almost given up the Ship as lost. I have gone So far as to declare that if he martin vanburen is elected that I will leave the united States for I never will live under his kingdom. before I will Submit to his Government I will go to the wildes of Texas. I will consider that government a Paridice [sic] to what this will be. In fact at this time our Republican Government has dwindled almost into insignificancy our [boasted] land of liberty have almost Bowed to the yoke of Bondage. Our happy days of Republican principles are near at an end when a few is to transfer the many. In 1831 the Choctaw nation became the first tribe to be forcibly ousted from their lands in Mississippi. After a treaty was signed and agreed upon, approximately 17,000 Choctaw made the move, while 5,000 elected to stay. The Seminoles, located in modern-day Florida, put up a military resistance to removal but after two wars, they were removed in 1832. The Creek removal followed in 1834, the Chickasaw in 1837, and finally the Cherokee in 1838. In almost every case, the Indians were not provided with the adequate supplies they were promised, and as a result many perished on the forced migration due to disease and starvation. Of the 15,000 Creek who marched to their new home in Oklahoma, only 3,500 survived the journey. Similarly, of the 16,000 Cherokee who were forced to move from several south-eastern states to present-day Oklahoma, 4,000 died due to disease, starvation, and adverse weather conditions. In all, tens of thousands of American Indians, some estimates are close to 100,000, lost their lives and their homelands in the series of forced migrations which lasted through the 1840s.

Glossary

Acculturation: The cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture.

Andrew Jackson: (1767-1845) 7th President of the United States, military general, governor, and senator. He is most well-known as the founder of the Democratic Party, and for his controversial passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. He epitomized the "Common Man," or self-made man, of the nineteenth-century, having been the first U.S. president to not have been born into a wealthy, aristocratic family or to have received a formal education.

Assimilation: The process of adopting or adapting to a different culture, group, or nation.

Davy Crockett: (1786-1836) American frontiersman, folk hero, politician, and soldier. He represented Tennessee for three terms as a U.S. congressman. As a soldier, he fought in the War of 1812 and died at the Battle of the Alamo during the Texas Revolution. His reputation as a frontiersman elevated him to folk legend status during his political career. He is one of the most celebrated and mythologized figures in American history. Enlightenment: an eighteenth-century philosophical movement that stressed the belief that science and logic gave people more knowledge and understanding than tradition and religion.
Environmentalism: the theory that views environment, not heredity, as the most important factor in the cultural and intellectual development of an individual or group. Part of the Enlightenment teaching, endorsed by lead eighteenth-century philosopher John Locke.

Indian Removal Act: (1830) passed by Congress during President Andrew Jackson's administration, the law authorized the president to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi River to American Indians in exchange for their ancestral homelands, which were within the existing borders of the United States.

James Monroe: (1758-1831) 5th President of the United States. He oversaw major westward expansion of the continental U.S., and strengthened America's foreign policy with the eponymous Monroe Doctrine (1823), which warned that any attempt by European powers to colonize the Western Hemisphere, or interfere with their politics, would been viewed as a hostile act against the United States.

Land speculation: the risky nineteenth-century investment practice or strategy of buying cheaply large quantities of land, guessing when the prices of the land would rise enough to make a profit, and then selling that land. During the peak time of U.S. westward expansion, large amounts of public land was opened for private speculation. Louisiana Purchase: (1803) purchased from France during President Thomas Jefferson's administration, the region of the United States encompassing land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.

Manifest destiny: the nineteenth-century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the U.S. throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable.

Martin Van Buren: (1782-1862) 8th President of the United States. He served as Vice President to Andrew Jackson, who he succeeded in the presidency, and for a time was Secretary of State under Jackson. Van Buren was the first president born a U.S. citizen.

Thomas Jefferson: (1743-1826) 3rd President of the United States, Founding Father, author of the Declaration of Independence, and American lawyer. Jefferson oversaw the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France and arranged for the exploration of that territory by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Trail of Tears: a series of forced relocations of several Indian nations by the U.S. government in the 1830s and 1840s, following the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The tribes forcibly removed during this time were the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole. The phrase "Trail of Tears" originated from an 1838 description of the Choctaw nation removal, in which one Choctaw chief told a newspaper that the forced migration was a "trail of tears and death."

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